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SUSSEX COUNTY-N. J.

Planning Board, Historical Building, Newton

Porch Enclosures FOR YEAR AROUND COMFORT



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When Newark Was Younger

Upland Playgrounds

BY MIRIAM STUDLEY

Principal New Jerosy History Librarian, Newark Public Library

WHEN strangers in Essez County hear Newarkers refer to the Orange Mountains, their first reaction is one of astonishment. It is obvious that the early settlers who named the parallel ridges First Mountain and Second Mountain had not seen hills even as high as the Berkahires. Nevertheless, mountains they are to us, and mountains they surely seemed to our forefathers from Connecticut.

Less than 10 years after Newark's founding the lots in the uplande were parceled out. From 1875, when the ont. From 1675, when the division was made, until 1807 the section east of High street was known as the Town at the River. All the upland to the west, as far as the top of First Mountain, was called Newark Mountain. The lots were taken up by the first settlars or their children. Some erected homes, others used the acreage for pastures, farm lands, wood lots and orchards, traveling back and forth on horse back or on foot.

It was the discovery of mineral springs at Orange that changed the manner of living there and started the suburban and recreational development of the last 100 years. The first spring to be opened was at Tory Corner, at the junction of Washington street, Valley road and Eagle Rock avenue.

The Orange Spring Hotel attracted hundreds of guests from Newark and New York, especially during 1823 when a cholera epidemic raged in the cities until Fall. Though Saratoga Springs later came to eclipse the popularity of Orange as the "chief Summer resort of the United States,"

many people of means who had vacationed in the Orange Mountains so appreciated the fine air and healthful surroundings that they built bomes all along the lower slopes of the ridge,

TRANSPORTATION played an important part in the growth of the settlements along the mountain. The farmers, millers and wood cutters all benefitted from the first roads put through in the early 1700s, though these were hardly more than cart tracks through woods with an occasional bridge where the streams, fuller than they are today, were too large to ford. Swinefield road was used by farmers to reach the Passalc River meadows where their pigs fed; the fastidious people of the mid-19th Century Washington street, the other to Eagle Rock avenue! Early in the 1800s the turnpike era begun.

Mt. Piessant avenue, one of these early toll roads, terminated at the village of Mt. Pleasant, an important junction west of Dover. It connected the Morris County Iron mines with Newark. In this era, too, developed the "shunpikes," stretches of road used by local people to detour the toll gates and avoid paying

Stages, and the early development of the Morris and Essex Railroad, helped to bring the villages of Orange and South Orange closer to the centers of trade. As early as 1857, according to The Newark Daily Advertiser of October 6, many fine reci-dences had been erected along the alopee of the Orange

Mountains and business men were commuting to Newark and New York

THE growth of Liewellyn Park was followed by the opening up of real estate developments known as Mountain Ridge, St. Cloud and Hutton Park. Mountain Ridge. unbroken forest in 1860, was laid out between Northfield road and Mt. Pleasant avenue by Dr. Edgar Marcy, whose brother General Marcy, also built there. General Marcy's son-in-law, General George B. McClellan, built his home "Maywood" there in 1864, A McClellan, calony of distinguished and wealthy people joined them, and a lively social life developed which attracted much public interest, intensified when General McClellan became Governor of New Jersey in 1878.

The general was very popular and was a picturesque figure as he rode over the hills on his fine horse, "Daniel Webster St. Cloud became more of a Summer resort, with homes of a cottage type. frequented by New Yorkers who shared in the gay entertainments while Hutton Park grew up where the Essex County Country Club now stands.

Ponds, streams, and waterfalls, landscaped by the Orange Spring Company, added charm to an exclusive residevelopment, while the Pillot residence became the clubhouse when the Essex County Country bought his property in 1820, The "Blue Tavern," built in built in 1820, later the Van Rensselaer mansion, and many other fine homes around the Country Club became known as Hutton Park. As golf, lawn

SEPTEMBER 25

NEWARK SUNDAY NEWS

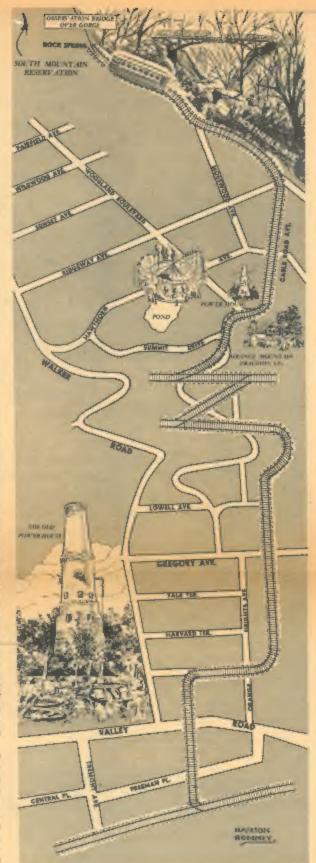
tennis, horseback riding, a ? hunting became popular with wealthy residents, the club came a center for fashionable people from all over the country. Meets and tournaments attracted contestants spectators from Long Island, Westchester and as far away as Boston.

THE development of horse car railways simplified the problem of getting about for people of modest means, electric transportation brought the mountain Its great popularity as a recreation area for Newarkers. The amusement park at Cable Mountain and the old cable railway leading to it were described in a story in The Newark Sunday News August 7, this year Cable Lake is now the swimming pool of the Rock Spring Country Club, which acquired the property in 1929. An route of the cable road, and one of 1911 shows the zigzag path taken by the Orange Mountain Traction Company over a switchback system introduced after the accident of June 24, 1906. A favorite Sunday afternoon ride for many Newarkers, the trolley line lost in popularity as ilt-neys and private automobiles ecame common, being aban doned about 1914.

About the time that the able Road was built, plans Jere made to run an electric car line to the foot of Eagle Rock. Built by the Suburban Traction Company, the line persted via Washington Areet, Cherry street, Missis-nippi avenue, and Matthew avenue then roundabout over its own private right-of-way to Cox's Hotel on Mountain avenue. A twisting foot patiied to the summit. The line was acquired in 1898 by the Orange and Passale Valley Traction Company, according to Christopher Schmitt, chief traffic investigator for Public Service Co-ordinated Transport, and bought by Public Service about 1900

At the turn of the century Eagle Rock became a goal for picnickers, who loved to row on a little ice pond to the south later made into Crystal Lake. The amusement park, developed around the lake with its merry-go-round, dance hall and restaurant, became so popular that people going there stood on the running boards of the crowded open cars and conductors had a hard time collecting fares.

Change has had its way all along the mountain since the development of the auto-mobile. Eagle Rock Reservation, acquired by the Easex County Park Commission in 1897, attracts auto parties and picnickers; Crystal Lake is popular with excursionists and ice skaters, but the Essex County Country Club has moved west over the ridge. A \$1,000,000 spartment house is being erected on the site of Hutton Park. The brook running through the 20-acre cract will be left intact, the only reminder of the romantic days of the 19th Century.



Route old switchback ours took up Orange Mountain.



Auto racing up Eagle Rock avenue once was sport.



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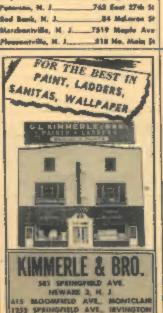
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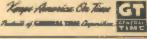
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